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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 11 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to new violations of the airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region of Nicosia by military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force.

On 11 April 1996, a formation of two Turkish Air Force aerial reconnaissance aircraft, RF-4, entered without permission the north-western section of the Nicosia flight information region, flying at an altitude of 34,000 feet. The two aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus flying at 15,000 feet and exited the Nicosia flight information region, one at 1137 hours and the other at 1135 hours, flying in the direction of Turkey.

On 10 April 1996, another formation of two Turkish Air Force aircraft, RF-4, violated Cyprus airspace, entering at 1530 hours the north-western flight information region of Nicosia at an altitude of 2,000 to 30,000 feet. The two aircraft flew along the western and southern coast of Cyprus and exited the north-eastern Nicosia flight information region at 1604 hours returning to Turkey.

Another formation of two Turkish Air Force aerial reconnaissance aircraft, RF-4, violated Cyprus airspace on 10 April 1996, at 1109 hours, entering the Nicosia north-western flight information region at an altitude of 32,800 feet. One of the aircraft overflew the Kormakitis area at an altitude of 32,800 feet, while the second one violated Cyprus airspace from 1136 to 1200 hours, flying at an altitude of 2,400 to 5,000 feet from Morphou to Lefkonico. The two aircraft met north of Kormakitis at 1210 hours and they exited the Nicosia flight information region in a north-western direction towards Turkey.

The RF-4 aircraft that violated the Cyprus airspace are aerial reconnaissance aircraft and it is believed that their mission was for aerial photographic reconnaissance of the coastal and other areas of Cyprus.

On 25 March 1996, a formation of two Turkish Air Force aircraft, F-4, entered from 1114 to 1117 hours the north-eastern flight information region of Nicosia at an altitude of 30,000 feet, flying at a speed of 373-534 knots. Another formation of two F-4 Turkish aircraft entered the north-eastern and eastern Nicosia flight information region from 1244 to 1259 hours on 25 March 1996, flying at an altitude of 26,000 to 35,000 feet.

The repeated violations of the Nicosia flight information region and of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish military aircraft are indicative of the provocative attitude of Turkey, which in 1974 invaded and occupied 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

At the same time, such unauthorized intrusions into the Nicosia flight information region are in violation of international air traffic rules and seriously endanger civil aviation flights over Cyprus.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest against these violations of the Nicosia flight information region and of the Republic's airspace by Turkish Air Force aircraft. These violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council on the question of Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicos AGATHOCLEOUS
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Cyprus
to the United Nations